

March 5, 1984

LB 915

Almost \$300,000 in college scholarships in the last twenty years. The facility at Columbus is used over a hundred times a year for groups like...and I will just name a few, 4-H people, Senior Citizens, various church bazaars, Bloodmobile eight times last year, County Extension people, and so forth. So I want to emphasize again the good things that are done by these benevolent organizations and we have to bring that into this argument at some point. Two years ago Platte County Ag Society made a total of \$16,000. Now what is \$16,000 to an organization like that? Nothing. They are just trying to survive. Other than the harm that is done and we know is done by messenger services, those people that are not brought into Columbus for the races to actually physically attend, we are losing money from the motels, from the cafes, from the gas stations and all the other local industry that we have there that benefits by people coming to town, by bringing fresh money in. I want to make it clear, I don't blame the messengers at all in this. They are business people. They are trying to make a living too just like everybody else. I guess if I have to blame somebody, I would blame the Legislature for trying to resolve this in 1977 and not doing it right. They found a loophole, as Senator Hefner said. For three years they existed on a court injunction and for four years since on a loophole. We didn't do it right the first time. We have a second chance. I want to wholeheartedly reject the argument that this somehow helps the tracks, it helps the racing industry. Who are we or who are the messengers out in the rotunda to tell these people what is best for them? The horsemen support this bill unamended. All five racetracks support this bill unamended. The Breeder's Association supports this bill unamended. So who are we to tell them their business? I understand there will be some elderly and infirm impacted by this that can't physically get to the track. That is probably true and I guess I would point out that almost every bill we pass here has an adverse impact on someone. We have to go for the greater good. Nebraska doesn't have the population to consistently fill our racetracks so we need all the people there that we can get. Senator Hefner said there are 55 or so or somewhat less maybe operating in Omaha. I know we have two or three messenger services in Columbus that actually have a